ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2011
111 STUDENT SERVICES BUILDING

REPORT

Present: Stefanie Ohnesorg (Chair), Ralph Brockett, Yanfei Gao, Camille Hall, LeAnn Luna, Jennifer Morrow, Christian Parigger, Kay Reed, Marian Roman, Todd Skelton.

The meeting was called to order by Stefanie Ohnesorg, Chair, at 2:15 p.m. in 111 Student Services Building.

Stefanie Ohnesorg reviewed the committee web page and bylaws, including the process for setting agendas for the meetings. She reviewed the use of Blackboard for posting documents and agenda items that guide committee work.

1. Proposal to Change Graduate Catalog Policy: Admission Requirement

   A proposal to change an admission requirement related to transcript submission that was developed by Yvonne Kilpatrick, Director of Graduate Admissions, was distributed for review and preliminary discussion by the committee (Attachment 1). Stefanie stated that one of the priorities in the implementation of the Top 25 Initiative relating to graduate education is to improve graduate admissions processes. This proposal is designed to expedite the processing of admission applications by allowing graduate students to send unofficial transcripts at the time of application and to base an initial admission decision on these unofficial transcripts. According to this proposal, students are still required to provide official transcripts once admitted.

   The committee welcomes this attempt to align with the Top 25 Implementation Plan and began to review the proposal, discussing the changes as they would impact admission of international students specifically. Several questions were raised in this context, and the committee decided that authoritative answers could only come from those experts directly related to these processes. Therefore, the committee proposed to invite Yvonne Kilpatrick and Joann Ng Hartmann, Associate Director of Center for International Education, to attend the October 6, 2011 APC meeting. We would like these experts to address the following questions, in particular:

   Questions for Yvonne Kilpatrick:

   - From the NAGAP report, did the schools using an admission process based on initial unofficial transcripts then compare all unofficial transcripts with subsequently received official transcripts? Or was only a certain percentage checked? And if so, what determined the specific criteria for checking.

- What procedures for processing an unofficial transcript do these schools referred to in the NAGAP report use?
- Is the Office of Graduate Admissions planning on developing specific deadlines or timelines for the submission of unofficial and official documents beyond what is currently in place? Should these dates on the timeline fall before the cutoff for admission?

Questions for Joann Ng Hartmann:

- Do the I-20 and DS-2019 require official transcripts before they can be issued to the student?
- If the university finds fraudulent records or does not receive official transcripts and makes a decision to not allow the student to continue in registration for a second semester, what are the repercussions from the perspective of the legal responsibilities of the university? (When we offer an I-20/DS-2019 aren't we accepting for a longer period of time than one semester?)

The next meeting will be on Thursday, October 6, 2011 at 2:15 p.m. in 111 Student Services Building.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

ATTACHMENT 1

The University of Tennessee at Knoxville
Proposal to Change Graduate Catalog Policy: Admission Requirement

Effective Academic Year 2012-2013

Effective Fall 2012:

(1) The Graduate School will permit the submission of unofficial transcripts, degree certificates, and English translations to the Graduate Admissions on-line application portal for the purpose of evaluation and offer of admission.
(2) The Graduate School will require submission of official transcripts, degree certificates, and English translations to the Graduate Admissions Office following the offer of admission.
(3) The Graduate School will reserve the right to revoke admission to any student whose documents noted in (1) are found to be fraudulent following review and comparison with the official documents noted in (2).
(4) The Graduate School will prohibit registration after the first semester of enrollment until students have submitted the official copy of transcripts from all institutions previously attended.

An unofficial transcript or university record is defined as follows:

An unofficial transcript or university record can be in the form of a scanned copy of the transcript or university record from the institution or an academic record uploaded from the institution's student information system portal. It must contain the institution name, course names, grade information, terms of attendance and any academic notations. Transcripts or university records that are not in the English language must be submitted in both the original language and the certified translation

Current UT *Graduate Catalog* language (2011-2012)

Application Procedures Section, Bullet #3:

To apply for admission, the following materials must be sent to Graduate Admissions.

- One official transcript from all colleges and universities attended.

Admission of International Students Section, Bullet #3:

The following items must be received before admission will be considered.

- Official or attested university records, with certified translations if the records are not in English (notarized copies are not accepted).

Proposed UT Graduate Catalog language (2012-2013)

(Replace Application Procedures Section, Bullet #3)

To apply for admission, the following materials must be sent to Graduate Admissions.

- One unofficial transcript from all colleges and universities attended submitted on-line at the time of application to the Graduate School. An unofficial transcript or university record is defined as a scanned copy of the transcript or university record from the institution or an academic record uploaded from the institution's records repository. It must contain the institution name, course names, grade information, terms of attendance and any academic notations. Unofficial transcripts or university records that are not in the English language must be submitted in both the original language and the certified translation at the time of application.

(Insert below Application Procedures Section, Bullet #4)

The submission of official transcripts, degree certificates, and English translations must be submitted to the Graduate Admissions Office following the offer of admission. The Graduate School will reserve the right to revoke admission to a student if any unofficial or official documents are found to be fraudulent following review and comparison. Registration is prohibited after the first semester of enrollment until students have submitted the official copy of transcripts from all institutions previously attended.

(Replace Admission of International Students Section, Bullet #3 and #4)

- One unofficial transcript or academic record and degree certificate from all colleges and universities attended submitted on-line at the time of application to the Graduate School. An unofficial transcript or university record is defined as a scanned copy of the transcript or university record from the institution or an academic record uploaded from the institution's records repository. It must contain the institution name, course names, grade information, terms of attendance and any academic notations. Unofficial transcripts or university records and degree certificates that are not in the English language must be submitted in both the original language and the certified translation at the time of application.

  The submission of official transcripts, degree certificates, and English translations must be submitted to the Graduate Admissions Office following the offer of admission. The Graduate School will reserve the right to revoke admission to a student if any unofficial or official documents are found to be fraudulent following review and comparison. Registration is prohibited after the first semester of enrollment until students have submitted the official copy of transcripts from all institutions previously attended.

Justification:

Recent trends in Graduate Admissions indicate that institutions are identifying and implementing processes that will expedite the admission decision notification to applicants. In a competitive market, timely response to applicants is critical. One of the identified processes, as presented by several institutions at the 2011 Annual Conference of the National Association of Graduate Admissions Professionals (NAGAP), is electronic submission of unofficial transcripts for the purpose of evaluation and offer of admission.

Applicants that are offered admission must submit final official transcripts or university records to the institution. This reduces the total number of transcripts or university records that must be verified and reviewed for authenticity. The final official transcript or university record is compared to the unofficial documents previously submitted. If there are discrepancies in the documents, the Graduate Admissions office will investigate. If the documents are found to be fraudulent, the admission offer will be revoked. Presenters at the NAGAP conference reported no incidences of fraud. Some have been utilizing this model of submission for several years.

Submitted to Kay Reed by Yvonne Kilpatrick for review by the Academic Policy Committee, 08/12/11